JUST CAUSE

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EDITORIAL

Recently we have received comments from several pro-UFO readers questioning the relevancy and value of what we have published in the last couple of years. We have apparently not been pro-ET enough. A clarification is in order.

While we may personally think that there is something very worthwhile and unexplained about some UFO reports, organizationally our purpose is not to advocate an answer, pro or con, without harder information. We are filling historical gaps in the record, publishing what we hope is interesting, original research, and, of course, trying to put an end to secrecy relating to UFO reports. Our purpose is not to force "spins" on information that we obtain in order to satisfy the beliefs of pro or con UFO researchers. If UFO information is censored or withheld, it does not mean that such information is de facto proof of an answer to UFOs. Nor does it mean that such information is therefore unimportant and not related to UFOs but to other security concerns. It does mean that UFO information is being withheld contrary to the conclusions of the government's Condon Report, the official document which ended the Air Force's involvement in the public UFO debate. The report concluded that the study of UFOs could not be expected to advance science and that no hazard or threat to national security existed. If so, then the secrecy makes no sense and all withheld UFO data should be made available.

We could very likely double our subscription rolls by reporting tittilating stories of underground alien bases, of simple verbal accounts claiming knowledge of UFO technology, of what has become so very trendy now - alien/human SEX! Actually it would not be enough to report such information - we would have to advocate it on a soapbox. Then we would likely be invited onto numerous media programs to give the public what it craves - sensation.

As one UFO pundit told us recently, printing sensible information is not the road to fame and fortune. Trying to be balanced and careful seem to be undesirable traits to some. So be it. We exist to inform, not to put on a Wild-West show.

MORE FOO-FIGHTER RECORDS RELEASED

On September 3, this editor visited the National Archives in Suitland, Maryland in an effort to locate additional records on Foo-Fighters. Fifteen

documents were found with fragments of new information.

The focus of the search were the records of the 415th Night Fighter Squadron, the same unit responsible for many of the Foo-Fighter sightings of the period. Of particular concern were the "Mission Reports." These were the source documents of the 415th's Unit History, which we discussed in the June Just Cause. It was thought that perhaps more detail existed in these mission reports, elaborating upon the Unit History.

Archives personnel provided a large cardboard box holding three feet of file folders of the 415th NFS and affiliated bomber groups. The period covered was late September 1944 - April 1945. It was obvious that I would spend at least a full day scanning this bunch. The records were not in the best condition, a fact which should be of great concern to those interested in the contents of old files, not just on this but on any subject. Many of the papers were onion-skin copies, very fragile and yellowing. Other reports were on coarse, brown paper which was very brittle, flakes of which were coming off on my hands. It was no longer surprising why quite often when CAUS would request and receive government files the copies were difficult, and sometimes impossible, to read. We are in a race against time as many government records are literally self-destructing on the shelf. With the millions of copies for which the National Archives is responsible, there is simply not enough staff or resources to take care of it all.

What also became clear is that the staff of the National Archives are not absolute authorities on the records that we have obtained regarding UFOs. The response I had to a request for help in locating a particular Air Force document with an identifying number was, "Good luck, we don't know." Not that they were being fresh but that the Air Force had lost the inventory to that group of documents. I had a new appreciation for the time delays in responding to FOIA requests as well. It took me the best part of a day just to scan one box thoroughly. I was in a room with about thirty to forty people, all of whom had their own agenda and own piles of paper to scan. Factor in mail requests and the demands on the staff must be terrific. I heard a complaint by one of having to pull <u>hundreds</u> of boxes himself to fulfill researchers' requests just for that day.

The 415th's mission reports tended to be brief in their descriptions of everything. There were reports of aircraft destroyed, buildings bombed, flak, vehicles destroyed; etc. Then, scattered amongst the information, were reports of strange lights in the sky.

The following is an accounting of these reports:

December 14/15, 1944 - Mission 1 - 1735-1915 - Saw light which appeared to be 4 or 5 times larger than a star going about 200 MPH near Erstein. Couldn't get sighting - Poor visibility.

December 16/17, 1944 - Mission 5 - 0040 - Fired at lights in Lichtenau - No results observed. 0130 - Fired at lights in OCS (R-3522) - No results observed.

December 16/17, 1944 - Mission 6 - 0155-0345 - Lichtenau-Buhl area. Saw lights in Neufreistett (R-1407), guns would not fire so returned to base.

December 22/23, 1944 - Mission 1 - 1705-1850 - Put on bogie by Blunder at 1750 hours, had A.I. contact 4 miles range at Q-7372. Overshot and could not pick up contact again. A.I. went out and weather started closing in so returned to base. Observed 2 lights, one of which seemed to be going on and off at Q-2411.

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MISSION REPORT

UNIT REPORTING: 415TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON

MISSIONS : 2 MISSIONS 2 SORTIES DATE : MARCH 14/15

REPORT :

1. 1845/2030 - INTRUDER. Visibility too poor for observation. Patrolled 7th Army Front from R-1108 to HAGENAU - artillery flashes seen. Before leaving, saw floo fire (3 red lights) 3 miles away at 3,000 feet stationary. Vicinity of LUNEVILLE, saw what appeared to be ammo dump burning.

2. 1900/2100 - INTRUDER. Observed Scattered M/T going south between BADEN BADEN and KELZENGIN (W-0255). Fired at 6 M/T, saw strikes on 2 M/T, another overturned. Claim 1 M/T destroyed and 2 M/T damaged. FLAK - Intense, light (20mm) at RASTATT. Fired at light 5 miles east of Rhine at V-9036 - NRO.

CLAIMS	DESTROYED	DAMAGED
Motor Transport	1	2

LOSSES

None

Copy of original 415th NFS Mission Report.

W. Mumtland
Maj. A.C.
a-2

December 22/23, 1944 - Mission 7 - 0350-0730 - Patrolled 10,000 feet Strasbourg - Sarrebourg. At 0600 saw 2 lights coming toward a/c from south. Turned away after about 2 minutes when near Hagenau. Saw orange glow and thought it might possibly be jet a/c.

December 22/23, 1944 - Mission 8 - 0535-0750 - Patrol Sarrebourg - R-4559. Saw lights from plane and orange glow. Thought it possible jet a/c.

January 1/2, 1945 - Mission 3 - 1810/2010 - Patrol North and East of base. Was vectored toward Bogey - No contact.

January 1/2, 1945 - Mission 5 - 2045/2145 - Patrol. Saw red flares off port wing 10 miles south of base. A.I. [air intercept radar - ed.] went U/S; so returned to base.

January 1/2, 1945 - Mission 8 - 0230/0600 - Patrol. Vectored on to Bogey when at angels 11. Could not get closer than 7 miles. Lost contact when Bogey entered IAZ.

February 13/14, 1945 - Mission 2 - 1800-2000 - About 1910, between Rastatt and Bishwiller, encountered lights at 3000 feet, two sets of them, turned into them, one set went out and the other went straight up 2-3000 feet, then went out. Turned back to base and looked back and saw lights in their original position again.

February 14/15, 1945 - Mission 2 - 1940-2140 - String of lights north of Freiburg, (1 red one in center, 4 white ones on each side) blinking on and off.

March 14/15, 1945 - Mission 1 - 1845-2030 - Patrolled 7th Army Front from R-1108 to Hagenau - artillery flashes seen. Before leaving, saw floo fire (3 red lights) 3 miles away at 3000 feet stationary.

March 19/20, 1945 - Mission 9 - 0045-0355 - At Speyer saw 2 "Foo" Fighters - 1 orange ball and 1 green one - seemed to be closing in from portside. Evaded them and lost them.

March 26/27, 1945 - Mission 5 - 2230-0130 - Patrol. Patrol Worms area. Saw an orange ball that came up from ground and disappeared before it reached the Beau.

April 23/24, 1945 - Mission 5 - 0105-0320 - P-61 Patrol - Wisenburg-Ludwigsburg Area. At Rhine River, R-9593, observed 4 lights arranged in a square. Lights went out as plane approached.

One frustrating feature of these reports is their brevity. It is difficult to form a hypothesis on the origin of Foo-Fighters when such fragmentary information is available. It is sometimes hard to tell whether reports of "lights" by the pilots were in the air or on the ground so one should exercise caution when reading reports where this is not clear.

The reports involving the 415th rather stretch beyond the time previously thought to encompass all of the known sightings from that unit. In our June issue, we had indicated that sightings ranged from late October 1944 through the end of January 1945. We can now see that the 415th experienced encounters to nearly the end of the war.

Readers of our previous Foo-Fighter report will note too that the various mission reports cited here are different, less detailed than the

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MISSION REPORT FORM
A-2 SECTION

TIME: 1000___ DIST: C.G.___ A-3___
1400___ FINAL X CONT___ XII TAC X

DATE: 3/10/44

1. GROUP OR WING: 4 GROUP (FB)

2. TOTAL NO. MISSIONS: 5 TOTAL NO. SORTIES: 35

3. TYPE OF MISSIONS:

ARMED RECCES.

4. ROUTE OR AREA:

AS DIRECTED.

5. FLAK:

6. CLAIMS:

TYPE	DESTROYED	DAMAGED
LOCOMOTIVES	1	1
RAILROAD CARS	0	20
MOTOR TRANSPORT	11	4

7. LOSSES: 1 P-47 DESTROYED BY FLAK, PILOT MISSING.
2 P-47 DAMAGED BY FLAK, CAT.1, PILOTS SAFE.

8. ENEMY A/C: NIL

9. REMARKS: SAW APPROXIMATELY 100 YELLOW, SEMI-TRANSPARENT BALLOONS ABOUT 1 FOOT IN DIAMETER AT 2-3000 FT AT W-1052 AND V-9153.

Copy of original Mission Report.

"Operations Reports" quoted in the 415th's Unit History. These will be the next target of a records search.

Finally, the document on page 5 is a record found separately from the 415th's reports. This involves the 4th Fighter/Bomber group in France. The pilot reported "100 yellow, semi-transparent balloons" measuring 1 foot in diameter seen during his mission. Nothing more is said. Was this a mass Foo-Fighter invasion, or real balloons, individual descriptions of which rather disturbingly resemble some reported Foo-Fighter incidents?

Much work remains on this issue. Our files contain references to other units whose records have not yet been searched. We expect to obtain more detailed inventories of such records and will proceed to locate them.

THE ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION

Readers of UFO history will at one time or another have come across mention of an Air Force document called the "Estimate of the Situation." "Estimates" were prepared by the Air Force during the early years of the UFO controversy to cover a wide variety of topics, most of which were not UFO-related. However, one was prepared in 1948, according to former Project Blue Book head, Captain Edward Ruppelt, addressing the issue of flying saucers. Ruppelt said that if one had something to say about a vital issue, an Estimate was written.

The document was said to be a thick document with a black cover, printed on legal-sized paper. It was stamped "Top Secret." Written sometime in mid-1948, shortly after the famous Chiles/Whitted saucer incident of July 24, 1948, over Alabama, the authors of the report (personnel at Project Sign, the Air Force's first official UFO study) had concluded that after a year of study flying saucers were interplanetary. The Estimate was sent on its way upwards through the chain of command for inspection. It was eventually rejected by the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt Vandenberg. Vandenberg declared that the report lacked proof and ordered it declassified and destroyed. Reportedly, a copy of the Estimate survived until at least 1952, when it was seen by both Ruppelt and Major Dewey Fournet, the Air Force's Project Monitor for Blue Book, the Air Force's most well-known incarnation of UFO investigation.

With these two named individuals the only ones identifiable who had seen the document outside of the original official line of command, they were the best source of post-1948 information about the Estimate. Ruppelt died in 1960, but Fournet is still living and was recently interviewed about the Estimate by CAUS associate, Jim Melesciuc.

Fournet explained that the report was discovered in the files that he had inherited as the Air Force's UFO project monitor at the Pentagon. He had virtually stumbled across it while researching other UFO background material.

The report, he said, was not especially thick, maybe 20-30 pages, and it still had the security marking on it, though it was supposed to have been declassified. It reviewed all of the apparently unexplained reports received by the Air Force up to the time the Estimate was written. Logical explanations were explored for the cases used, but in the end the extraterrestrial explanation was regarded as the answer. Fournet was very explicit in stating that the Estimate contained no confirmation of artifacts having been recovered from flying saucers.

There was, according to Fournet's recollection, deplorably little UFO sighting data available when the report was written, and that the extraterrestrial conclusion was the result of "extreme extrapolation." It was felt that the Estimate's purpose was to create enough interest in Air Force Intelligence with such a premature conclusion so as to motivate

a more organized and complete investigation than had been done to that time. "I've never given that Estimate much weight in the overall USAF UFO program simply because it occurred too early in the investigation," Fournet said.

A report discovered several years ago in Air Force Intelligence files is generally regarded as a spinoff of the original Estimate. Titled "Air Intelligence Division Study #203" and dated 10 December 1948, researchers had every reason to believe that this document was a watered-down version of the Estimate. It was on legal-sized paper. It was classified "Top Secret." It was 40 pages long (Fournet believed the Estimate to be 20-30 pages). AIDS 203, however, concluded that while the sightings were "substantiated," the door was left open for "misidentifications of domestically-launched devices, natural phenomena, or foreign unconventional aircraft."

The date of 10 December 1948 suggests that after the original Estimate was sent up and knocked back for lack of proof, the new report was prepared by elements supporting serious UFO study in order to make such research more palatable to the high command.

Since Fournet is one of the few remaining eyewitnesses to the Estimate, a copy of AIDS 203 was sent to him for comment as to whether this information resembled the Estimate's contents. He responded with an emphatic no, though his recollection of the case material was enough that he felt the reports in both publications were of the "same order of magnitude." Fournet added that AIDS 203 would likely have been in his files in Washington. He had no recollection of seeing it, feeling that the conclusions of AIDS 203 were "rather unacceptable" by late 1951. "We had generally concluded by then that they could not be of foreign origin (i.e. the Soviets)," he said.

In his UFO Encyclopedia - Volume 2, Jerome Clark recounts a story by Kevin Randle, co-author with Don Schmitt of UFO Crash at Roswell, of meeting an Air Force colonel who had worked at ATIC, Wright-Paterson AFB, Ohio, during the late 1940s. This colonel said that the Estimate was delivered to General Vandenberg, who in turn handed it back with instructions that two paragraphs relating to "physical evidence in New Mexico" be removed. Project Sign personnel completed the report, minus the paragraphs, and sent the Estimate upwards again. According to Randle's information, Vandenberg rejected the Estimate again on 5 August 1948, saying that the conclusions weren't warranted without physical evidence. This was despite the fact that Vandenberg himself had ordered the physical evidence paragraphs deleted.

So goes the story. A closer look at the information reveals a certain lack of common sense in the alleged incident, raising questions about its authenticity.

Keep in mind that the Estimate is a "Top Secret" document for internal Air Force eyes only. If Project Sign personnel included references to physical evidence in New Mexico (presumably the famous Roswell incident, unless there was another secret crash that no one knows about), then they obviously were privy to the reality of the crash of an extraterrestrial vehicle. This would certainly explain the extraterrestrial conclusion of the Estimate.

Sending it to General Vandenberg and having it returned with instructions to delete the (Roswell?) information would be somewhat mystifying to Sign personnel. If they knew it was real, General Vandenberg must have known. Why would he not want to be told the obvious in an internal Top Secret report? Well, perhaps he had his own reasons for deleting these particular sections. Very high level stuff that Sign was not to question why. But since the General wanted a simple 2-paragraph edit job, the rest of the report, and extraterrestrial conclusion, would go through.

Otherwise he would have killed the Estimate right then and there.

So the Estimate is sent up again, this time refused by Vandenberg for lack of proof of extraterrestrials. Astonishing! Why go through the farce of a second submittal? Sign personnel, and others, must have felt at this point that General Vandenberg was really yanking their chains and having a good laugh over the foolish waste of time he created by forcing his own intelligence people to prepare a document that had no chance of being considered and approved. If the persons preparing the Estimate already knew a New Mexico physical evidence story was real, why did Vandenberg pull a blatantly transparent con job in front of his men for no good purpose? The Estimate was classified "Top Secret." It had no chance of going public, or even beyond the "eyes only" who were involved and knowledgeable. That is unless he had no confidence in his intelligence people to control such a situation and decided that a practical joke was the solution! Why lie to his men in such a ridiculous way?

It is a certainty that the Estimate of the Situation once existed. We think there is a very good chance that it still exists, in a file box buried with millions of other documents at a government warehouse. While it may not settle the UFO controversy, this "Holy Grail" of UFO documents will be a challenge to find. Whether it is found or not it will still stand as a dusty relic of an earlier time when a piece of the power structure in government, perhaps for the first time ever, really believed that we were being visited from the stars.

REVIEW - UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA: VOLUME 2

Once again Jerome Clark has contributed a terrific overview of the UFO phenomenon in its "Golden Age." Pouring over huge amounts of reference material, much of it now obscure and difficult to find, he has managed to pull together a reasonable summary of the major figures and events of the early UFO era.

All the better because present UFOlogy is badly in need of perspective. More often than not, this reviewer has seen an influx of persons newly-interested in UFOs who have little or no concern as to how the subject has evolved. Goals and aims are determined by what everyone else talks about, what the current trends may be, what is "in." A certain amount of fadishness abounds in UFOlogy, feeding ill-directed pursuits.

Much is to be learned from what once was. UFO Encyclopedia: Volume 2 will waste no one's time in providing the vital background necessary to make determinations as to where to take their fascination with UFOs.

As is common with reference books, the price tag is steep ($85), which can be discouraging to most readers. A solution might be to urge the local library to invest in the series, making the information widely available. Those with more disposable incomes than the average reader would find this volume packed wall to wall with UFO history. Clark has also corrected a glaring lack in Volume 1 by introducing photos to break up the text.

One may obtain the series by contacting: Omnigraphics; Penobscot Building; Detroit, Michigan 48226.

FINAL WORDS

A reminder once again that exchange magazines must send copies to P.O.Box 176; Stoneham, Ma. 02180, for proper tracking.

Our next number will carry a disturbing story of FOIA "dirty tricks" recently brought to our attention. It would explain much of why we have had obstacles thrown in our way by agencies manipulating the law. We wonder if everyone knows the Cold War is over.